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UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 001200

SIPDIS

STATE PASS USAID  
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SUBJECT: IFESH VOLUNTEERS ARRIVE DJIBOUTI FOR ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE TEACHING

1. (U) Six International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH) volunteers, consisting of three men and three women, arrived September 9 in Djibouti for a 10-month assignment to teach English in Djibouti's education system. They were met at the airport by Momodou Mombouray of IFESH headquarters, who is in Djibouti to help the volunteers settle in, and Djama Equeh, the newly-recruited IFESH country representative. The arrival of the volunteers is a year-long collaborative effort by USAID/Djibouti, IFESH CEO, Dr. Julie Sullivan, and Djibouti's Ministry of Education. Strong support has come from Minister of Education Abdi Ibrahim Absieh.

2. (U) Three of the volunteers will be attached to Pole University in Djibouti, two to the Ministry of Education Research and Material Development units and the Teacher Training College, and one to the Industrial and Commercial High School of Djibouti. All volunteers will live in Djibouti city. Most have had extensive experience living and teaching in Africa south of the Sahara.

3. (U) Ambassador welcomed the group at her residence for tea and discussions about their program. She noted the Government of Djibouti's desire to have all its citizens learn English, and stressed the need for the volunteers to work toward achieving results that are tangible. She also discussed the new English language laboratory that the Embassy has recently donated to Pole University. Also present at this event were USAID Representative Janet Schulman and USAID Djibouti Basic Education Team Leader Steve Dorsey. While on the Embassy compound, the volunteers received a security briefing from the Regional Security Officer and, as American citizens, registered at the Embassy's Consular office.

4. (U) Minister of Education Absieh welcomed the volunteers in a huge press and media event on September 12. Present at that event were the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, Directors and Advisors of the Ministry of Education, including the President of Pole University, the President of the Teacher Training College, and Directors of Research, Instruction and Planning. During that event, USAID representative Schulman expressed her joy and pride in seeing the American volunteers in Djibouti and welcome them on behalf of USAID. Minister Absieh stressed the need for the volunteers to feel at home, to get to know Djiboutians, and asked for their patience as the Ministry completed remaining renovations on their permanent housing. He told the volunteers that he was glad to have them in Djibouti and would do everything to make their tour a success.

5. (U) The volunteers spent an additional hour with the Directors and Advisors of the Ministry of Education discussing the Djiboutian education system and learning about their individual assignments and programs. The volunteers had already toured parts of Djibouti during their first weekend in country, visiting Ali Sabieh to the South, Tadjourah to the north and Lake Assal, the scenic salt lake and lowest point on the African continent.

6. (U) Funding for the Djibouti English language program is approximately USD 400,000 from an AID/W grant to IFESH.  
RAGSDALE